

LAY PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF VATICAN II

On November 18, 1965, after the solemn promulgation of the Decree on the Lay Apostolate, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, Pope Paul VI gave a copy of the text to six lay « auditors » — three men and three women — attending the Council. The gesture has often been remarked. The Decree, it is said — and rightly — was given to the laity for implementation. But another significance can also be discerned. To a real, if limited, extent, it was their Decree, not only because it was *for* them, but also because lay people had made it possible and contributed to its preparation.

Clearly, there can be no question of drawing a sharp line between what the Council documents owe to the laity and what they owe to the clergy. To attempt it would be to miss the point of Vatican II. The aim of this « pastoral » Council was to renew the life of the Church, the day to day life of the whole people of God, in which hierarchy, clergy and laity must work together, with « diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission » (A.A., 2). If, for the first time, an Ecumenical Council had dealt explicitly with the laity and the lay apostolate, the fact was largely due to active sharing in this mission by lay men and women over the preceding decades; but it was a sharing in close communion and collaboration with the Pastors of the Church. The new awareness of the Christian significance of the layman's life, the reflection on concrete experience which were to be the starting-point for the Council's work did not come unaided from the laity. Many texts bear the unmistakable signature of one or another Council Father, eminent theologian or chaplain of a world-wide lay movement¹. Authentic lay participation in the Council's work is none the less clearly discernible.

¹ Commenting on the Decree, a layman wrote: « In the last fifteen years, the ideas of Cardijn and Congar have permeated the whole field of the lay apostolate; at many points in the decree one can spot the

The subject opens up a wide field of research for historians of the Second Vatican Council, and even of the Church during the past century. Here we can do no more than give a few indications, set up a few signposts, in the hope that they will be followed.

Three stages can be distinguished:

1) Remote preparation for Vatican II, especially in the work of lay movements.

2) Immediate preparation: the collaboration of lay people in the work of the preparatory commissions, and the sharing of the laity in the wider task of bringing the whole Church into a « state of Council ».

3) Participation of lay people during the actual celebration of the Council.

We shall be concerned mainly with the remote or immediate preparation of the work of the Conciliar Commission on Lay Apostolate, which not only drafted the Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, but also collaborated with the Theological Commission in drafting Chapter IV of the Constitution *Lumen gentium* and, especially, in preparing the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

REMOTE PREPARATION

In the remote preparation for Vatican II, the part played by the growth of a mature sense of Christian responsibility among lay people is mainly discernible in the work of the lay movements. These emerged into fuller visibility after the second world war² with the foundation or development of nearly

authorship, like a traditional theme in a modern symphony»: DERMOT H. DE TRAFFORD, writing in « The Tablet », London, January 15, 1966.

² The historical perspective can obviously not be limited to the twentieth century. Pius XII, in his address to the First World Congress for the Lay Apostolate, on October 14, 1951, traced the development of the modern lay apostolate back to the Council of Trent, to the first Marian Congregations and to Mary Ward: cf. *Actes* of the Congress, Roma 1952, p. 4445.

40 Catholic International Organizations (C.I.O.) active in almost all fields of Christian endeavour³ and with the two World Congresses for the Lay Apostolate held in Rome, in 1951 and 1957, and preceded or followed by regional meetings in the different continents. The Secretary of the Preparatory Commission on the Lay Apostolate, Mgr. Achille Glorieux⁴, when questioned as to the Commission's agenda, advised the enquirer to scan the proceedings of the World Congresses: the reports of the twenty workshops which met in 1951 to study sectors of apostolate ranging from catechetics and the family to public opinion and ecumenism, or again the texts of the Second World Congress, on « The Laity in the Crisis of the Modern World: Responsibilities and Formation ».

We cannot attempt to trace here the history of the Congresses — organized on the initiative of a layman, Vittorino Veronese — nor yet of the various international movements. We want only to stress the point made by the Englishman, Patrick Keegan, when he spoke to the Council on behalf of the « Auditors »: the schema on the lay apostolate, he said, marked « a point of fulfilment in the historical development of the lay apostolate ». It was « the result of the progressive discovery by men and women of their responsibility and role within the whole apostolate of the Church »⁵. Herein lie both the richness and the limits of the Decree on the laity. As the epitome of an already long experience, it could not also be, at least to the extent that some would have wished, a prophetic call to the new possibilities opened up by the Council through its renewal of the image of the Church, as people of God, in solidarity with all mankind.

³ For the present situation of the C.I.O. and of the Conference which serves their mutual collaboration, see *The Laity Today*, « Bulletin of the Consilium de Laicis », n. 13, 1973.

⁴ Mgr. Achille Glorieux, Ecclesiastical Assistant from 1954 of the Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate, (COPECIAL), was to be Secretary of the Preparatory Commission on the Lay Apostolate, of the Conciliar Commission, the Post-Conciliar Commission and, from 1967 to 1969, the « Consilium de Laicis ».

⁵ This first statement on behalf of the Auditors was made on October 13, 1964, during the 100th General Congregation.

The competent Preparatory and Conciliar Commissions were to wrestle for many months with the search for a definition, or rather a description, of the « layman », with the reality of the layman's apostolate, its varied relationships to the hierarchy, the place of « Catholic Action » within the whole « apostolate of the laity », the concept of a « mandate » given to the laity and its confrontation with the responsibility of every baptized Christian and with the layman's legitimate autonomy in the secular field... These were not just academic exercises between theologians; they raised questions which lay people had been asking in the course of their own experience. The controversy over « Catholic Action » which raged during the '50's and early '60's⁶ seems remote today, but it was a matter of real concern to many lay people struggling towards a consciousness of what it meant to « be the Church »⁷.

At the World Congress of 1957, when Pius XII referred to the laity for their consideration (an unprecedented step at the time) a « suggestion » concerning the terminology and structures of « Catholic Action », which had been submitted to him⁸, feelings ran high and problems of more world-shaking import risked taking second place⁹.

The years of experience and reflection preceding the Council had not, however, produced only this perhaps too « intra-mural » concern. Their fruits may be seen in the « Basic Texts » pre-

⁶ cf. *Bibliographical Guide to the Lay Apostolate*, Supplement to « Lay Apostolate », n. 2, 1961, and to n. 1, 1963.

⁷ cf. Pius XII to the College of Cardinals, 20-2-1946.

⁸ The « suggestion », as was later known, came from the then Mgr. Suenens, Auxiliary Bishop of Malines.

⁹ The one Protestant present at the Congress, Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber of the World Council of Churches, was to be an Observer at the Third World Congress in 1967. Giving his impressions at the closing session, he recalled his earlier experience of « heated discussions... about the relationships between the hierarchy and the laity, between Catholic Action with a capital C and catholic action with a small c. Such an inner, Catholic organisational discussion tended to overshadow the excellent things said... for instance, about the mission of the Church in the modern world and about lay spirituality ». He added, speaking for the post-Conciliar Congress, « This time... the world has provided the agenda »: *God's People on Man's Journey, Proceedings of the Third World Congress for the Lay Apostolate*, I, Roma 1968, p. 139.

pared for the Second World Congress. The theological texts, on « The Mission of the Church », « The Nature and the Apostolic Vocation of the Laity »¹⁰ had been prepared, at the request of the lay people responsible for the Congress, by theologians who were to play a foremost part in the Council¹¹; they were to provide a *status quaestionis* which would be the starting-point for much of the Council's work concerning the laity¹². The other « Basic Text », on « The World of Today: the Responsibilities of the Laity »¹³, prepared by lay experts in various fields, presented, in 1956, a panorama of the contemporary scene and of the pastoral problems involved which foreshadowed on many points the future Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*. It is surely not accidental either if, in Chapter VI of the Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, we find an approach strikingly similar to that of the workshops of the Second World Congress on « Basic Formation for the Apostolate », a formation which is the responsibility of all Christian educators, whether in family, school, parish or lay movements.

More than contributing to the actual drafting of future Council documents — an undreamed of possibility at a time when few lay people even had clear ideas on the nature of an Ecumenical Council —, these studies undertaken by lay men and women conscious of sharing responsibility for the Church's mission, undoubtedly contributed to creating the climate in which the Council was to be possible. The embarrassment felt by many Council Fathers about expressing the mind of the

¹⁰ *Laymen in the Church, Texts of the Second World Congress for the Lay Apostolate*, Roma 1958, p. 211-231.

¹¹ The Texts were drafted by Mgr. Emilio Guano, later Bishop of Livorno, and Mgr. Gerard Philips. Chairman of the group of theologians was Sebastian Tromp, S.J. The group worked with the Ecclesiastical Commission of COPECIAL, of which Mgr. Pietro Pavan was a member.

¹² cf. R. Tucci, S.J. *I laici nella crisi del mondo d'oggi: responsabilità e formazione*, «La Civiltà Cattolica», 1957, IV, p. 449-462.

¹³ *Laymen Face the World*, Texts, II, p. 255-278. The theme of the Congress was further developed in a volume, *Le monde attend l'Eglise* (Paris 1957), with contributions from 21 lay men and women outstanding in various fields, from government or science to the cinema. Editions were published in 6 languages, including English (*World Crisis and the Catholic*, London-New York 1958).

Church on matters of primary concern to the laity but without any direct contribution from lay people, bore witness to the close collaboration which had existed in many parts of the world.

Significantly, in October 1967, the post-Conciliar Third World Congress of the laity was to be held — at the wish of Pope Paul VI — concomitantly with the first Synod of Bishops, as a sign of communion in the one mission of the Church. But, long before the Council, lay movements had provided in their international gatherings a forum — at the time, the only forum — where awareness of the pastoral problems of the universal Church could grow in shared reflection of hierarchy, clergy and laity. Some of the bishops, many of the « periti » and most of the lay people attending the Council had shared this experience.

THE IMMEDIATE PREPARATION

The Preparatory Commissions

In his history of the Decree on the Lay Apostolate¹⁴, Mgr. Achille Glorieux stresses the difficulties which had to be met in the initial stages. There were simply no precedents for the work of an Ecumenical Council on such a theme. On the purely practical level, there was no Congregation or other office of the Holy See¹⁵ which could serve as a base for the work of the Preparatory Commission set up at Pentecost 1960. An Office, « Actio Catholica », had been created by Pius XI in 1938, but this centre for documentation and promotion, presided over by Cardinal Pizzardo, had become practically inoperative. It was the Congregation for the Council which set up, in 1959, an Antepreparatory Commission « *De laicatu catholico* ». The work of this Commission¹⁶ reflects ample material received on the sub-

¹⁴ In *L'Apostolat des laïcs*, « Unam Sanctam », Paris 1970, p. 91-139.

¹⁵ The Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate (COPECIAL) had been set up by Pius XII in 1952, but was not an official body of the Holy See.

¹⁶ cf. *Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando*, III, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1960, p. 157-214.

ject from the bishops of the whole world, who had been consulted on the agenda for the Council. It reflects also the documentation received from the two World Congress for the Lay Apostolate and from the Catholic International Organizations, particularly, the addresses and messages of Pius XII which had marked major events in the organized lay apostolate for nearly twenty years.

The Preparatory Commission for the Lay Apostolate was to be largely favourable in its composition to an indirect « presence » of the laity through priests having a wide range of experience in relation to lay movements¹⁷. But this was by no means felt to be satisfactory. The President of the Commission, Cardinal Cento, made repeated efforts to obtain authorization for direct and official collaboration from lay people. In the meantime, both he and Mgr. Glorieux multiplied contacts with lay movements, and material was welcomed from lay sources.

The archives of the Preparatory Commission contain a series of documents¹⁸ received — at times solicited — from external sources and which were, as a general rule, given to all members. The first document to be so distributed was the summary of replies received by the COPECIAL to the worldwide enquiry on « Catholic Action » launched in 1958 in response to the « suggestion » referred to the World Congress of 1957.

Many of these documents were the work of a « Special Group » set up for the purpose by the Conference of C.I.O. They concern, for instance:

— The action of Catholics at international level¹⁹.

¹⁷ Mgr. Glorieux notes that « the members and consultants, who were all specialists, made scarcely any reference to printed material... The work consisted above all in reflection on the reality which they had been experiencing over a long period of years »: *Op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹⁸ The documents bear the reference « Ri E » (« Ricerche esterne » or « Relationes et inquisitiones externorum »). Like the majority of texts submitted to the Council by lay groups, most of the documents are in French. The fact is not without significance for the contribution made to Vatican II by the organized laity.

¹⁹ A series of documents from various sources deal with this subject, for which the lay people concerned felt particularly responsible. For

- The place of woman in society and in the Church.
- The difficulties of lay people engaged in social action.
- The Christian in a world of technology.
- Pastoral problems of the intellectual milieu.
- Chaplains and organizations for the apostolate.

Particular national and international organizations also submitted documentation, e.g. on ecumenical work among the laity, on « General Catholic Action », on the St. Vincent de Paul Society, on Co-operatives in relation to the lay apostolate.

In addition to the material on « Catholic Action », COPECIA also submitted studies, for example, on the significance of terminology used for clergy working with lay people (« Chaplain - « Ecclesiastical Assistant » - « Moderator », etc.), and on lay people working full-time at the service of the Church (cf. A.A. 22). The most ambitious project was, however, the publication in 1963, of the « Panorama of the Organized Lay Apostolate in the World », intended to illustrate the concrete reality which the Fathers were discussing in the schema before them²⁰.

The « Fribourg Meeting »

One other document prepared for the Preparatory Commissions deserves special mention: the report of the « Fribourg Meeting ».

Fribourg, Switzerland, is proud of its long association with the making of Church history at international level. It was there, on the initiative of the President of Pax Romana-ICMICA Prof. Ramon Sugranyes de Franch, that a meeting was held on July 17, 1960, which — no doubt, for the first time — brought an international lay group²¹ together for the purpose

most of the bishops the Council was a first experience of « international living » — a fact which is reflected in a certain lack of precision in Conciliar references to international forms of the apostolate.

²⁰ The Latin edition, *De Laicorum Apostolatu organizato hodie tot in orbe terrarum diffuso* (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1963, p. 88), was distributed in the Aula on October 22, 1963. Editions in English, French and Spanish circulated both inside and outside the Council precincts.

²¹ Of the 22 participants, 4 were priests involved in international activity. The lay people (including 3 women) were active in many fields

of contributing to the work of Vatican II. The Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, Mgr. Charrière, accepted to preside over the meeting.

The confidential synthesis of the discussions is introduced with these words: « The whole Church is from now on "in a state of Council". All the faithful are more or less vaguely aware of the approach of a great event in the life of the Church — "a seismic shock for Christendom", as one Protestant Minister put it... ».

The aim set by the organizers was to discuss « without fixed agenda, in presence of a bishop, problems which, from their experience of life and apostolate in the modern world, they feel should receive attention from the Fathers of the Council ». The agenda which emerged included the status of the laity in the Church, Christian unity, Church-State relations, peace and the international community, the government of the Church, pastoral problems of the working and intellectual milieu, the training of priests for work with the laity, the Church in the newly-emerging nations.

Some of the desiderata appear timid in retrospect (on Christian unity, the group expressed the hope that « nothing would be done to widen the gap between the Catholic Church and the separated communities »); but other proposals foreshadowed post-Conciliar reforms in the Roman Curia; and viewpoints related to international social justice, education, freedom of scientific research, lay collaboration in pastoral work, etc. afforded a synthesis of thinking which had matured during several decades and was to be reflected in the documents of Vatican II.

« *Creating the climate* »

A less direct, but no less important contribution to the immediate preparation was made by lay people who helped to bring the whole Church really into « a state of Council ».

political life, UNESCO, education and the University, youth, workers' movements, etc. Africa, Asia, North and South America and Australia had one representative each; the others were from Europe.

Much could be said here of the work of lay journalists of high calibre who interpreted the aims, and later the work, of the Council for the thinking public²².

The Conference of C.I.O. did not only draft memoranda. With the help of Father A. Wenger, it provided for its members a regular information service on the preparation of the Council and organized a campaign of prayer for the year immediately preceding the opening of the Council. COPECIAL, taking its cue from Pope John's Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram*, launched a worldwide study on Unity — between men, between Christians, between Catholics — which was summed up in theological text by Mgr. Gerard Philips²³.

Within this context of the « climate » for Vatican II, we might also recall the preparation undertaken at diocesan level (e.g. in Belgium and Holland) with the enthusiastic participation of the laity. The bishops who convened the « people of God » will certainly have noted down many points which found their way into Conciliar texts.

This form of lay involvement was to continue throughout the Council. In Canada, in 1964, 25 lay men and women — housewives, university professors, lawyers, business executives, trade unionists... — « spoke their minds » in a volume published in response to a general invitation issued by the bishops in 1962²⁴. The subjects, dealt with in a spirit of constructive dialogue, range from political freedom, labour problems, sexual ethics to ecumenism and theology for lay people, with three approaches to « women's role » in Church and society. That the laity met with a receptive hearing is clear from the Foreword written in February 1965 by Mgr. Pocock, Coadjutor Archbishop of Toronto: « ...The essays came to us as a breeze at a time when we knew that upon our return to Rome our

²² In France, during the preparatory period, Jean-Pierre Dubois-Dumée, then Associate Editor of *Informations Catholiques Internationales* in addition to articles and TV programmes, gave more than a hundred lectures on the Council to packed audiences throughout the country.

²³ *Unity among Christians in a World Seeking Unity: a Gift and Mission*. Supplement to « Lay Apostolate », n. 3, 1962.

²⁴ *Brief to the Bishops: Canadian Catholic Laymen Speak Their Minds*, ed. P. T. HARRIS, Ontario 1965, p. 242.

main deliberations and decisions would affect the laity directly and intimately; we knew that we were going to be called upon to state in unequivocal terms the Church's posture towards the modern world. With such... fearsome challenges before us, we welcomed the opinions contained in the many essays presented to us »²⁵.

In French-speaking Canada, active consultation had begun earlier. Special meetings were convened in about ten dioceses, the first in Montreal in 1961²⁶. In the diocese of Saint-Jean, after months of preparation, a hundred lay people responded to the invitation from their Bishop, Mgr. Coderre to meet on January 28, 1962.

It can scarcely be coincidence that the Canadian bishops were among those who advocated most strongly « declericalization » of the schema on the laity. It was Bishop Carter of Sault Ste Marie who complained that laymen had been officially consulted « too little, too late »²⁷. And, during the debate on « Schema 13 », it was Bishop Coderre who made, on October 28, 1964, the first substantial statement to the Council concerning the role of women in society and in the Church.

THE CONCILIAR COMMISSIONS

The Commission for the Lay Apostolate

The Conciliar Commission « for the Apostolate of the Faithful, the Press and Entertainment » — covering the field of work of both the Preparatory Commission for the Lay Apostolate and the Preparatory Secretariat for the Press and Communications Media — met during the first period of the Council without the laity. Both continuity with earlier work and attention to the views of lay people were facilitated, however, by

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

²⁶ cf. « Laïcat et Mission », bulletin of Canadian Catholic Action, October 1962.

²⁷ « Too late » even to remove the traces of the « peccatum clericalismi » in which the schema had been conceived (9-X-1964). cf. Also the statement by Mgr. Charbonneau, Bishop of Hull, on October 7, 1964.

the appointment of Cardinal Cento as President and of Mgr. Glorieux as Secretary²⁸, as well as of several members who had been in the Preparatory Commission for the Lay Apostolate.

When the Commission met on December 5, 1962, the Secretary explained the steps taken during the preparatory period to make up to some extent for the absence of the laity: consultation, circulation of documents from lay groups and in direct contact through « periti » working with them.

On February 5, 1963, when a revised schema was sent to members and periti, the bishops received an extra copy to facilitate consultation with lay people in their respective countries. This was the result of the work undertaken for the future « Schema 13 ». Competent lay people were to be consulted from the outset for the new schema; it was natural that the permission should be extended to the work in progress for the decree on the lay apostolate.

At the same time an official request for collaboration was made to the Directing Board of COPECIAL, which met in Rome February 26-28. The summary of its discussions submitted to the Commission contained proposals for the general tone, outline and structure of the schema and on a series of particular points: relations between hierarchy, priests and laity; coordination of the lay apostolate; formation; Catholic Action; the apostolate at international level and through social action, etc.²⁹ Collaboration had also been sought from the Catholic International Organizations through their ecclesiastical assistants³⁰. Acknowledging the material received from the COPECIAL and the

²⁸ The other Secretary was Mgr. Galletto, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Cinema, Radio and Television.

²⁹ Chairman of the Board was Silvio Golzio (Italy); members: Jean Pierre Dubois-Dumée (France), Marguerite Fiévez (Belgium), Patrick Keegan (England), Karl zu Löwenstein (Germany), Claude Ryan (Canada), Ramon Sugranyes de Franch (Spain), Juan Vazquez (Argentina), Marti Work (USA). Executive Secretary: Rosemary Goldie. Maria Vendrik and Mieczyslaw de Habicht took part in the work as President and General Secretary of the Conference of C.I.O. respectively.

³⁰ The possibility of collaboration was limited by the fact that replies had to be returned in about two weeks in order to be useful for the Commission. Language may also have been a problem. For COPECIAL a un-official English translation was hastily prepared.

C.I.O., Cardinal Cento remarked on the convergence of the various contributions and on their usefulness for the amendment of the schema.

The lay auditors

During the second Council period, after the appointment of 13 laymen as auditors³¹, the group met regularly to study the subjects on the Council's agenda and prepare contributions. The Commission for the Lay Apostolate, with which they were mainly working, authorized them to consult other lay people. A wider group became involved in this way in discussions which led, among other suggestions, to a proposal for a revised schema with the title, « The Participation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Church ».

In September 1964, the first « auditrices » — nuns and lay women — were appointed, and during the fourth period the group of auditors was further enlarged. Most of them were involved in the work of the Conciliar Commission and its sub-commissions, both when the Council was in session and during the intervening period³².

Introducing the *Relatio* on the schema of the decree, on October 6, 1964, Cardinal Cento stressed the contribution made by lay men and women: « Libenter enim non solum propositiones, desideria, suggestionesque utriusque sexus laicorum acceptimus, immo quandoque excitavimus »³³. The *Relator*, Mgr. Hengsbach added his own thanks to the auditors, who had frequently contributed to the amendment of the schema, and to other lay people, not officially associated with the Council, who had been consulted in Rome and elsewhere.

³¹ S. Golzio, J. Guitton, M. de Habicht, E. Inglessis, J. Larnaud, R. Manzini, J. Norris, H. Rollet, R. Sugranyes de Franch, A. Vanistendael, J. Vazquez, V. Veronese, F. Vito.

³² At the end of the Council there were 52 auditors: 10 nuns, one married couple (José and Luz Alvarez-Icaza from Mexico), 28 lay men and 12 lay women. A number of other lay people were invited as experts.

³³ *Relatio super Schema Decreti de Apostolatu laicorum*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1964, p. 3.

Another contribution of the auditors was made through interventions prepared during their regular meetings and presented in the Aula: We have already mentioned the statement made by Patrick Keegan at the close of the debate on the lay apostolate schema. On November 10, 1964, Juan Vazquez, President of the International Catholic Youth Federation, addressed the Council on «The Church in the Modern World», stressing the role of the laity in relation to the whole range of problems embraced by «Schema 13». On November 5, James Norris, President of the International Catholic Commission on Migrations, had made (in Latin) a personal appeal to the Council for action on the problem of world poverty. During the fourth period, on October 13, 1965, towards the end of the debate on the missionary activity of the Church, Eusèbe Adjakpley, from Togo, expressed on behalf of the auditors the hope that the Council debate would help many lay people — especially young people — to become aware of the call to missionary endeavour and of their own role in bearing the witness of Christian living as a leaven in society. He stressed also the importance attached by lay people to the ecumenical dimension of missionary activity and to collaboration with all believers in the expression of spiritual values³⁴.

A Roman «secretariat»?

A particular problem which was the subject of much consultation and discussion among the laity was the proposal — emerging already in the ante-preparatory phase of the Council — to set up «a special secretariat... at the Holy See for the service and promotion of the lay apostolate» (A.A., 26). This proposal was to lead to the creation, in January 1967, by the *Motu Proprio Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*, of the «Consilium de Laicis».

The Catholic International Organizations and their Conference on the one hand, the COPECIAL on the other, were

³⁴ The auditors had requested that one of the interventions in the Aula should be made by a lay woman; but this was deemed to be «premature».

vitaly interested in the problem, the former because of the relations to be established with any office of the Holy See concerned with lay apostolate at international level, the latter because it would normally be integrated into such an official body. All those who had been consulted in February 1963 on the schema prepared by the Conciliar Commission were, moreover, aware that the proposal had been made.

In December 1963, the question was discussed by the CO-PELIAL Directing Board and a note was subsequently presented to the Conciliar Commission in March 1964. The Conference of C.I.O., meeting in Barcelona in April 1964, set up a special group to study the question.

In June 1964, a small group was convened in Rome. It was presided over by Cardinal Cento and Mgr. Glorieux was Secretary. The members were 5 bishops, 2 priests and 8 lay people. The group drew up a plan for the future « secretariat ».

The next stage, early in 1965, was a worldwide consultation of the Bishops' Conferences — and through them of national lay organizations — as well as of Catholic International Organizations. Replies were received — after a delay of only two months — from 17 Bishops' Conferences and 36 (out of 50) international bodies. A first report was also submitted from a special assembly of the Conference of C.I.O. held at Sion (Switzerland) on June 5-6. Finally a similar group to that which had met the previous year was convened in Rome, June 25-26, to study the results of the consultation.

A further stage, the debate during the last period of the Council, led to the adoption of N. 26 of the Decree on the Lay Apostolate, but the discussion was to continue, with involvement of the laity, during the post-Conciliar period and until the creation of the « Consilium de Laicis ».

Generally speaking, the Conciliar text gave satisfaction to the lay people concerned, although many would have wished to see a clear statement of the « consultative » nature of the « Roman office », which they felt should not be a « directing » body. The subsequent creation of a « dicastero » of the Roman Curia introduced new aspects which are only now beginning to be clear even for many lay people more closely associated with this post-Conciliar body.

Outside the Council Aula

When the Council was in session, consultation of the laity was naturally not limited to the « auditors » and « experts » nor yet to the Conciliar Commissions and sub-commissions. Lay people, including visiting lay « celebrities », were even invited to address joint meetings of Bishops' Conferences.

But consultation was not always on the initiative of the Council Fathers. Lobbying went on apace at press briefings and in coffee bars, and in the whole « Council area » round St. Peter's. The C.I.O. and COPECIAL jointly manned an information centre in premises lent by the Sodality of Our Lady. Many lay movements sent delegations to meet with the bishops. At the two extremes of the spectrum of lay organizations, the Legion of Mary visited its episcopal friends from all over the world, and St. Joan's International Alliance tirelessly campaigned for women's role in Church... and ministry³⁵.

Written contributions from the lay movements also continued to arrive, or were solicited, as the Council proceeded.

The International Young Christian Workers Movement submitted already during the preparatory period 23 pages of reflections, from YCW leaders and chaplains in Africa, Asia, North and South America and Europe. By way of conclusion, the Council and its Commissions were requested to state clearly the laity's apostolic role, to stress the urgency of the work of the lay apostolate, along the lines given by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* and to appeal to priests in all countries to help in the education of young workers for faith as a life commitment. In February 1963, it was at the request of a number of bishops that a further document was prepared (32 pages) containing proposals on lay apostolate in general and in the working milieu of priests and laity, the parish, underdevelopment; etc.

³⁵ The French « specialized Catholic Action » movements were particularly assiduous. « Action Catholique des Milieux indépendants » had a delegation present throughout the whole Council. The leaders of the French movement for rural youth, interviewed by *La Croix* (20-12-1963) commented on the exceptional opportunity the Council afforded for talking with their own bishops: « You feel more at home speaking with the Bishops in Rome... The fact of being in Council makes them more receptive. You would think they were on retreat ».

In both documents, the YCW requested that a body be set up within the central government of the Church to promote the lay apostolate. In August 1963, the International YCW, the International Young Catholic Students and the international Movement for Rural Youth (MIJARC) jointly drafted a text on « Specialized Catholic Action among Youth » with proposals to the Council Fathers. One proposal concerned the apostolate among children, which was to be one of the points added in the final stages to the decree on the Lay Apostolate (N. 12).

The Laity and « Schema 13 »

On January 30, 1963, the Commission for Coordination requested the Commission on Lay Apostolate to prepare, with the Theological Commission, a new schema « On the principles and the action of the Church for the promotion of the welfare of society ». This was to be « Schema 17 », later « Schema 13 », and to become the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*.

In his introduction to the Pastoral Constitution³⁶, Father Tucci follows the phases of the work and lists the persons involved; among them, from the outset, a small number of lay people.

In the first months of 1963, 5 laymen were consulted for the initial drafting. In April 1963, 14 laymen took part in a meeting for the new schema — the first such official invitation issued to lay people.

When a Central Sub-Commission was set up in December 1963, with Mgr. Guano, Bishop of Livorno, as Chairman, the collaboration of lay people became part of normal procedure. The high point of the consultations was the meeting held at Ariccia, near Rome, from January 31 to February 6, 1965. With 30 Council Fathers and about 49 « periti », 10 lay men, 4 lay women and 2 nuns took part in all the work of the meeting.

³⁶ R. Tucci, S.J., *Introduzione storico-dottrinale alla Costituzione Pastorale « Gaudium et spes »*, in « La Chiesa e il mondo contemporaneo nel Vaticano II », Torino-Leumann, p. 17-134.

Two lay men and three women were invited also to a meeting in Rome the following week for the revision of the work done at Ariccia³⁷.

The schema drafted during the inter-session 1964-65 was presented to the Council on September 21, 1965 and debated until October 8. Redrafting began during the discussion and was carried forward by ten sub-commissions. Father Tuccillo notes that lay people collaborated actively in all of these, « often with decisive impact, for instance as regards the chapter on marriage, economic life and the political community »³⁸. The lay participation if active, was, however, spread rather thin. And it was difficult even for the lay people actually present in the Commissions (whether for the lay apostolate or for « Schema 13 ») to make a real contribution during the final stages; the rhythm of work was constantly accelerated and changes in the drafts could only be made through « modi » hastily presented through a Council Father or more influential « peritus », or perhaps through rapid conversations in the « coulisses » of the Council Aula, or vigorous signs of disapproval when a more unpalatable proposal was under discussion at the commission table. This makes it difficult, often impossible, to trace the real source of changes made to the texts. It is all the more remarkable that, in the two fascicules of the « *Textus recognitus* »³⁹, the Mixed Commission notes at least 12 times the pos

³⁷ Written contributions from lay people played an important part. The sub-commission for the chapter on Culture, for instance, had as its experts Joseph Folliet, Prof. Minoli of the University of Modena and Prof. Swiezawski of the Catholic University of Lublin; it used material also from an Association of French Catholic University professors, from a group of « *Laureati* » in Pinerolo and from Prof. Jean Ladrière of Louvain. Later contributions were to come from the Catholic Union of French Scientists and the French « *Action Catholique Ouvrière* ». In April 1965, the Conference of CIO organized a meeting in Vienna on « *The Church and Culture* » as a contribution to the work of the Council. The meeting will have had an impact even if the proceedings were published too late to be used in commission work for « *Schema 13* ».

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, note, p. 118.

³⁹ *Schema Constitutionis Pastoralis de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Textus Recognitus et Relationes*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1965, Pars I and Pars II, distributed to the Fathers on November 10 and 12 respectively.

tion taken by lay people — their insistence being at times the only justification for including or excluding a particular idea⁴⁰

Most of these references concern Part II dealing with « Problems of Special Urgency », where the competence of lay people was clearly needed.

Already in Part I, however, in Chapter IV on « The Role of the Church in the Modern World », lay members of the sub-commission are credited with stressing (N. 43, 3) legitimate plurality of opinions on matters not identified with the Gospel message⁴¹.

In Chapter I of Part II, on « Marriage and the Family »⁴², it was at the wish of the laity that families were urged to « share their spiritual riches generously with other families » (N. 48) and stress was laid on the ultimate responsibility of parents for making the « judgment, in the sight of God » as to the transmission of life (N. 50). The laity would have wished a fuller treatment in the Pastoral Constitution of the family as a whole⁴³.

For Chapter II on Culture, the auditors submitted a note which is explicitly reflected in N. 56, where the need is underlined for safeguarding man's faculties of contemplation and

⁴⁰ The « *expensio modorum* » for the schema on the Lay Apostolate quotes only suggestions from the Council Fathers.

⁴¹ « *Alii tamen fideles, non minore sinceritate ducti, ut saepius et quidem legitime accidit, aliter de eadem re iudicabunt* ». The words in italics were added. The numbers of paragraphs are those of the definitive text. English translations are from the *The Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (America Press, 1966).

⁴² On the question of fertility in marriage, which polarized so much attention, lay people were contributing in the Papal Commission set up outside the Council. Much material had also been received, e.g. the *Address to the Second Vatican Council on the subject of the Problems of the Family* signed by an international group of about 150 particularly competent lay people and printed in English and French. During the final drafting of the schema, the Alvarez-Icaza auditor couple made a considerable impact. Parents of 14 children, they were founders of the « *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano* » in Mexico and, before coming to Rome, they travelled to 36 countries asking the question: What does the family expect from the Council?

⁴³ In the work for the Lay Apostolate Decree, the excellent chapters drafted by the Preparatory Commission had been eliminated at one stage. Later, the passage on the family — subject and object of apostolate — was reintroduced in a shortened form (cf. n. 11), but without direct collaboration from lay people.

wonder « from which wisdom comes ». We refer later to the mention of women's participation in cultural life ⁴⁴.

We might have expected more evident lay contribution on economic questions. The *Relatio* on N. 68 (« Economic participation and conflict ») is, however, revealing. The paragraph on strikes is reported as having been acceptable to the lay people present in the Mixed Commission, among whom were both employers and workers ⁴⁵.

In Chapter V, « The Fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations », the lack of specific mention of lay opinion does not mean indifference or inactivity with regard to such matters as nuclear warfare and conscientious objection. But the lay auditors had been chosen largely from among leaders of international organizations — many of them with considerable experience of work with intergovernmental bodies —, and their collaboration was sought particularly in the field of international institutions, with which the Fathers and theologians were for the most part less familiar. Their help was especially effective in the drafting of N. 90 (« The Role of Christians in International Institutions »). The proposal contained in par. 3, for an organism « to stimulate the Catholic community to foster progress in needy regions, and social justice on the international scene », which was to lead to the creation of the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, had been foreshadowed in the statement which James Norris made to the Council during the Third Period.

In this same chapter, it was to meet the requests of lay people that mention was made of prayer for peace, and in particular of ecumenical prayer (N. 78, 4; 82, 2); and of the problems of « refugees scattered throughout the world » (N. 84, 2). It was also at the express wish of lay auditors that the Council

⁴⁴ The laity had taken a considerable part also in the debate aimed at introducing into this chapter an acknowledgement of the error made in the condemnation of Galileo. During the preparatory period, Pax Romana communicated a petition on the subject to the Holy Father from a large group of eminent scientists; and in April 1965, the lay people present in the Mixed Commission signed a further petition. Finally, the question was referred to Chapter III of Part I, and a note added to n. 36.

⁴⁵ *Textus recognitus*, Pars II, p. 51.

asked Catholic experts, especially in Universities, to further develop studies on the grave problems arising in the field of population (N. 87, 2).

The Council and « Women's Role »

One of the subjects on which the laity made a decisive contribution was no doubt the participation of women in the life of society and of the Church.

The schema on the Lay Apostolate distributed in 1963 included two paragraphs respectively on men and on women in the apostolate. These were later omitted. Their inclusion — and the principle of separate treatment — would have been contrary to the wishes of lay people as later expressed in the work of the Council.

The subject of women's participation was to be approached again explicitly only during discussion of Schema 13, except for two interventions of the debate on *De Ecclesia*, in which Cardinal Suenens and Archbishop Hakim drew attention to the silence of the schema on this point and proposed that women be admitted to the Council as auditors.

During the debate on « Schema 13 » there were at least 15 interventions in the third period and 10 in the fourth period on women in society and in the Church, apart from numerous statements on marriage and the family which naturally also concerned women. Two of the more important interventions were made by Mgr. Frotz, Auxiliary Bishop of Köln, one on October 29, 1964 and the other on October 4, 1965. The latter is clearly reflected in the passage of *Gaudium et spes*, N. 60 concerning women's participation in cultural life, which is reported⁴⁶ as being suggested by one Father and « the auditors ». It is certainly in line with the findings of the meeting on « The Church and Culture » organized in April 1965 by the Conference of C.I.O.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Textus recognitus*, Pars II, p. 35.

⁴⁷ The proceedings, *L'Eglise et la Culture, Quelques textes de l'Assemblée de la Conférence des Organisations Internationales Catholiques*, Vienne, 22-26 avril 1965, include a talk, *La femme et la culture*, by Maria Vendrik, one of the lay experts invited to the Council.

The women auditors, both lay and religious, were consulted repeatedly on « women's participation » during the last 10 periods of the Council and in the commission work on *Gaudium et spes*. Their approach, determined in consultation among themselves, was to encourage all statements against unjust discrimination (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 29) and favourable to better co-operation between men and women⁴⁸, but to oppose any attempt to define strictly — or even poetically! — the content of « women's role », whether in society or in the Church.

From the debate on « Schema 13 » the question of women's participation in the life of the Church was picked up again in the final drafting of the decree on the laity. A sentence was added, attributed to « two Fathers »⁴⁹, which reflects the approach of the auditors: « Since in our times women have ever more active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various fields of the Church's apostolate » (N. 9)⁵⁰.

One other reference to women in *Apostolicam actuositatem* is almost hidden. The Decree calls (N. 32) for « centres of documentation and study, not only in theology, but also in anthropology, psychology and sociology... for all fields of the apostolate, for the better development of the natural capacities of laymen and lay women... ». This also reflected the auditors' concern that « women's role » be further studied rather than prematurely defined.

⁴⁸ This approach was no doubt influenced by contacts with the World Council of Churches. In October 1965, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity took advantage of the presence of the women auditors at the Council to sponsor a meeting at Vicarello (Rome) between Catholic women and a group formed by the WCC Department on Co-operation between Men and Women in Church, Family and Society.

⁴⁹ *Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus recognitus et Munitus Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis*, 1965, p. 70.

⁵⁰ It was unfortunate that a written intervention by Mgr. Hallinan, Archbishop of Atlanta, which was distributed to the press in October 1965, came too late to be used by the Mixed Commission. It proposed reaching changes in the position of women in the Church; and requested that women's increased contribution be mentioned under the heading « The help which the Church receives from the modern world » (G.S.). A similar proposal had been made by one of the auditors.

* * *

After the promulgation of the Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, the lay auditors addressed a letter to the President of the Lay Apostolate Commission expressing their appreciation of the part he had played during the Council. In his reply, Cardinal Cento wrote: « I make no secret of the fact that this work will leave with me one of the happiest memories of my life. For the first time lay people — other than Kings or their Ambassadors — were present at a Council; they were present, not passively, but in an active manner for they had made an effective contribution to the preparation of our schema ».

The details of this participation may now have only historical interest; it may even seem so limited as to have been little more than symbolical. But the experience will have marked a milestone. It is unthinkable that the contribution of lay men — and women — to a future Ecumenical Council should be so great, and so long awaited, a novelty as to merit headlines in the daily papers and plush chairs in the front rows of an observers' tribune.

Pope Paul VI, speaking to lay members of the « Consilium de Laicis » on March 20, 1970, called them his « experts » on the life and apostolate of the People of God throughout the world. « Periti » from this category will surely be present from the initial stages of « Vatican III ».

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